



Meadow Road PRU

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134768
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 282686
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 15 March 2006
Reporting inspector John Lilly AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit	School address	Meadow Road
School category	Pupil referral unit		Dudley
Age range of pupils	11 to 14		DY1 3JY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818237
Number on roll	12	Fax number	01384 818241
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Lyn Culter
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Kulas

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Unit provides mainly for pupils excluded from school, who are in Years 7 – 9. At the time of the inspection all of these were boys and all were in Year 9. At the end of the summer term, most staff resigned and the first half of the autumn term was covered by interim staff. A new teacher-in-charge took up post on the 1 of November 2005. The local authority has developed a strategy for managing the service as a whole, and the extension of what Meadow Road pupil referral unit can offer forms part of this strategy.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The provision at Meadow Road Pupil Referral Unit is satisfactory and improving. The recently appointed teacher-in-charge found much that she wished to improve. Her evaluation of the unit's current performance matches the findings of this inspection. Her strong leadership, highly focused planning and efficient management have brought about rapid and considerable improvement. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and the curriculum is sensibly planned and is relevant to the pupils' needs. The behaviour and personal development of most of the pupils is good. Standards of care, welfare and guidance are satisfactory with several positive features. The accommodation is too small and this restricts what staff can offer. Even so, staff make the best of what is available and the unit presents as a bright and stimulating place in which to be and in which to learn. As a result of these improvements, more pupils are being reintegrated into mainstream schools, attendance is improving, albeit, slowly and pupils say they are learning a great deal; this is reflected in the quality of their work in books and on display. The unit is overcoming the hindrances posed by inadequate accommodation and lack of permanent staff and has good capacity for further improvement. There are good plans for future improvements. This is a journey, however, that is well begun but not finished.

While clear expectations have improved behaviour, staff are not giving pupils enough help in understanding their emotions. Pupils are not always told what skills and understanding they are trying to gain in a lesson and so this makes it harder for them to improve. Although written guidance on teaching is available, there is not yet an agreed programme of support for staff on how to gain the skills of highly effective teaching that these pupils require. The unit offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that staff receive better guidance on developing their teaching skills.
- Ensure that pupils know at the beginning of lessons what they should learn, followed by clear guidance on how they can meet these objectives.
- Develop better ways of helping pupils understand their emotions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry is very low and attainment remains low. However, most pupils are making satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress in English and mathematics. They make good progress in information and communication technology. They are making satisfactory progress across all other subjects in the much better planned curriculum, which is well matched to what they would be learning in mainstream schools. Achievement is especially high in art. Despite inadequate accommodation, there is evidence of satisfactory progress in science and design and technology. Especially good is the way pupils can link their work in English and mathematics to what they are learning in history. The Unit arranges for most pupils

to learn in morning sessions, and progress of all pupils in these sessions is at least satisfactory. A small minority, who have particular problems with attendance and their attitudes towards their learning, attend afternoon sessions. Progress for some of these pupils is still slow, although the curriculum and level of challenge is equally appropriate. Even so, the success of this strategy is seen as pupils are moved to the morning sessions when they become better motivated. During the inspection, progress in the afternoon session was good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good and they feel happy and safe when in the unit. Most show great pride in their achievements and have good attitudes to their work and towards others and an increasing number of pupils are returning to mainstream schooling. Behaviour during the inspection was good. Attendance overall is improving slowly and over time is satisfactory. The strongest element in pupils' development is in their rapid gain in social skills. In most cases they make great progress in learning to cooperate and collaborate. This was very evident during lunchtime, when staff and pupils eat together, and during the 'breakfast club' start to the day. These are skills that they will need in future employment, complementing the progress made in literacy and numeracy. Through artwork pupils demonstrate strong spiritual and cultural awareness and the latter is also apparent in their history projects. As well as behaving well, they are also starting to develop a real understanding of right and wrong. They show an understanding of why these are important concepts, for example, through discussion of why we need rules when playing games and how a referee makes decisions. However, some still struggle to control emotions and this aspect of well-being needs further development. Through involvement in the life and work of the unit, they become involved in decision-making and learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Above all, pupils say they enjoy their time in the unit or as one said, 'It's great!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. There is, however, variation. When teaching is good or better, this generates highly involved and well-motivated learning, however alienated the pupil may initially feel. In addition to being well planned, lessons are set at a level of challenge that successfully encourages the pupils to make a real effort. Feedback to pupils urges them to achieve more and more, and the planning offers a wide range of opportunities to learn. Even satisfactory teaching, however, shows a determination not to collude in the initially poor attitudes of the pupils, and this strong approach soon brings them around. However, teachers do not fully understand the aspects of what constitutes a very effective lesson. For example, teachers do not make clear enough what each pupil should learn by the end

of a lesson and sometimes the authoritative style of teaching reduces pupils to one word answers. Both these features reduce pupils' involvement in their own learning. Marking is very helpful in showing pupils where they have done well and what they should try next. The use of the 'success maker' software is developing well the pupils' ability to work independently and achievements, such as in art and mathematics. This is helping pupils to see that success is possible. There is good teamwork between the class teacher and assistants and teaching assistants play an important part in developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in both morning and afternoon sessions, although there is a wider range of subjects provided in the morning sessions. It provides a breadth of learning that prepares for return to mainstream schooling and is planned in ways that are relevant to the needs of the pupils. There are good links between subjects, for example, between studying Macbeth and work in art, and writing and a history topic on slavery. Good use is made of music and drama. A growing strength is the wider curriculum through visits, for example, an outstanding lesson observed at a local sports centre associated with a football club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Standards of care, welfare and guidance are satisfactory with some good features. Staff consider carefully what each pupil needs to succeed and this produces helpful individual education and support plans. There is good partnership with other agencies, for example, educational psychologists. Staff take good care of the welfare of pupils and the Unit provides a secure and safe environment. Guidance for pupils is continuous and perceptive but is not as systematic or comprehensive as management recognises it needs to be. There is minimal careers education. The unit has made improving behaviour a priority and has, as yet, not sought sufficient ways to help pupils deal with and understand their emotions. Even so, all pupils have key staff mentors and they highly value their help. Child protection procedures are secure. Attendance is well monitored and the importance of good attendance is encouraged strongly with both parents and the pupils. Despite there being work still to do, improved provision has made a significant contribution in helping pupils to manage their own behaviour and to have better attitudes to learning and other people.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The teacher-in-charge's initial audit of provision was extremely rigorous and realistic, and this led to a simple, highly focused and strictly pragmatic improvement plan. The plan addressed the most important things first, for example, the security and appearance of the accommodation and then

the curriculum and teaching. She refused to be daunted by the things that could have held her back, for example, accommodation, staffing and resources. Even though many staff were on temporary contracts, she provided fine leadership for them, setting clear direction and high standards. Staff morale is now high and their enthusiasm and teamwork clear to see. Consequently, improvement has been significant and rapid, and capacity for further improvement is high. There is clear strategy for the future with improvements tightly scheduled. Management ensures that the unit runs smoothly day by day but some management systems have yet to be fully developed. Evaluation has yet to be sufficiently guided by interpretation of data on, for example, progress, attainment and attendance. Individual monitoring and advice to teachers has effectively ensured teaching is satisfactory, However, there is as yet not enough guidance and training on what makes high quality teaching. The management committee ensures that the unit's planning is in line with the development of the service as a whole and that the unit feels less 'isolated'. Amongst other developments, there is much improved partnership with parents and the schools from which pupils have come, and to which they may return. This has helped significantly more pupils to return successfully to mainstream education.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me so welcome in your lessons, during lunch and during the time some of you spent talking with me. I enjoyed my day in the Meadow Road Pupil Referral Unit very much. You told me you felt happy and safe in the Unit, and that you felt you were learning a great deal because of the help you got from your teachers. Several of you told me how proud you were of what you achieved. Your parents said that were very pleased with the progress you are making and a headteacher told me how pleased he was with one of your number who is now back in a mainstream school.

I think that staff help you feel safe and cared for, and you told me that you agree. You are making progress in your work because you are taught by teachers who are very keen that you succeed. You are growing in self-confidence and most of you behave well. Most of you attend the Unit well, but some of you need to make a better effort to attend school. You learn interesting things and feel teachers understand and help with any problems you are trying to overcome. I felt the Unit was well led and managed and that you are playing your part in making it a good place to be.

To become even better, I suggested that your teachers:
helped each other to improve their teaching even more;
gave you more help in understanding your emotions and feelings;
made it clearer to you what they wanted you to learn in each lesson.

Thank you again for making my day in your Unit such a good one.